

Livestock and Seed Programs  
Agriculture Marketing Service  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Stop 0249, Room 2092-S  
Washington, DC 20250-0249

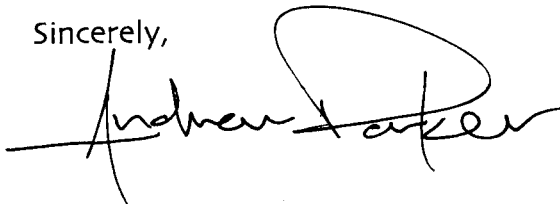
12.9.02

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing today to voice my concerns with the possibility of purchasing irradiated foods for use in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). My opposition to purchasing irradiated foods for American school children stems from the current reality that children have increasingly limited access to healthy food. Our current food systems prioritize foods that are fast and cheap. This priority has led us to creating large-scale, centralized production systems that create an over-abundance of marginal food, absurd amounts of waste, and an increasing disconnect from the source of our food. The current state of food production in America has stripped the "culture" out of agriculture, and has left the majority of the American people with food systems that are socially unfulfilling, environmentally unsustainable, and nutritionally deficient.

This is the production paradigm that we must shift in order to create alternatives to disease ridden, irradiated foods. We need to provide children with healthy, wholesome foods that are teeming with life. Foods that have been irradiated cannot be considered fresh, or healthy, in my opinion. Irradiation has been linked to causing cancer, as have pesticides and herbicides, especially in young children. We must provide our children with fresh, healthy, and organic food, not food that has been treated with radiation or produced in irresponsible ways. Irradiation is a band-aid solution to our current agricultural crisis and its symptoms of over-production, resource exploitation, and mishandling of foods. Alternatives such as the institutional purchasing of local and organic foods and the development of national policy for certification and assurance of responsible food production and handling will help begin to treat the root causes of our agricultural crisis. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Parker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Andrew Parker  
Deems Farm  
8423 SE 9<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Portland, OR 97202